

DECEMBER 20, 2002

**SCHAKOWSKY: □
"UNEMPLOYED GET NOTHING IN THEIR STOCKINGS FROM BUSH WHILE PRESENTS □
ARE PLENTIFUL FOR TOP POLITICAL □
APPOINTEES AND CORPORATIONS"**

CHICAGO, IL - A at news conference in one of Illinois' Employment and Training Centers, U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) said that laid off workers will get nothing in their stockings from President Bush and Speaker Hastert, while presents are plentiful if you are a Republican political appointee or a corporation like Eli Lilly. □

Before leaving for the Holidays, President Bush and Republicans in Congress refused to □ assist millions of unemployed workers participating in the Temporary Emergency Unemployment Compensation (TEUC) program by expanding the program. President Bush, Speaker Hastert, and Tom DeLay did not help:

- **800,000 laid-off workers, including 41,700 in Illinois, who will lose their 13 weeks of TEUC or temporary unemployment benefits on December 28, 2002. □**

- **One million people who have already exhausted their 13 weeks of temporary unemployment benefits.**

- **95,000 workers a week who will exhaust their regular unemployment benefits after December 28, 2002 and will not be eligible for TEUC benefits. □ (Between December 28 and March 31, 1.2 million people will lose benefits, including 52,100 in Illinois). □**

At the same time, President Bush and Republican Leaders in Congress sneaked "gifts" into the Homeland Security bill to expand corporate tax havens and to immunize Eli Lilly from legal recourse resulting from its production of unsafe vaccines. □ Bush also decided not to grant the Congressionally approved 4.1% pay parity for lower and middle income federal employee but instead reinstated cash bonuses of up to \$25,000 for political appointees.

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Schakowsky urged the President to call Congress back before December 28 to pass emergency legislation to ensure that benefits for 800,000 unemployed workers are not cut-off. □ Schakowsky also called for immediate passage next Congress of Democratic legislation that would reestablish the Temporary Emergency Unemployment Compensation (TEUC) program and guarantee all jobless workers at least 26 weeks of extended benefits.

During the news conference, Darlette McAlpin read from a letter she sent to Schakowsky: □ "It's almost Christmas and my unemployment ran out in the middle of

November. I don't have any savings, I'm behind in my mortgage and other bills. I don't have money to buy my children Christmas presents for the first time in their life. I don't have money for food..."

The Following is Schakowsky's statement:

**STATEMENT OF U.S. REPRESENTATIVE JAN SCHAKOWSKY (D-IL)
NEWS CONFERENCE CALLING FOR EXTENSION
OF UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS
DECEMBER 20, 2002**

It is a few days before Christmas, and it is not looking merry for millions of families in Illinois and across the country.

Laid-off workers who've lost or are about to lose their unemployment benefits are struggling to make ends meet, are going without basic needs, can't afford to pay the rent or mortgage, and have hit their credit limit and depleted their savings.

President Bush, Speaker Hastert, and Tom Delay were too busy playing Santa to their friends in November to care about helping workers who haven't been able to find jobs in this stagnant economy.

This Holiday Season laid off workers get nothing in their stockings from President Bush and the Republican Leadership. But presents are plentiful from the Republicans if you are a Bush political appointee or a corporation like Eli Lilly.

Almost 800,000 jobless workers, including 41,700 in Illinois, will lose their federal temporary emergency benefits three days after Christmas, at the same time Bush is handing out cash bonuses of up to \$25,000 to his top political appointees.

For the one million workers whose unemployment checks have already been cut off, there will be no holiday cheer. But corporations can still plan their holiday trips to Bermuda to incorporate there and avoid paying their fair share of taxes.

And if you are Eli Lilly, your gift from the Speaker and the President was two paragraphs in the homeland security bill that immunize the company from pending and future liability for producing dangerous vaccines that have nothing to do with homeland security. But if you are one of the 95,000 workers a week who will exhaust your benefits in the upcoming months, you're hoping for a miracle on 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Democrats demand assistance for struggling families, not incentives for corporations to stash cash in Bermuda tax havens, cash bonuses for political appointees, and special favors for companies like Eli Lilly.

The President's announcement last week that he wanted to help the 800,000 workers whose 13 weeks of temporary federal benefits would be cut off mid stream three days after Christmas was a day late and a dollar short. Where was the President in November when Democrats were fighting Right wing Republicans in the House to extend these benefits? These workers need help now. Democrats are calling on the President to bring Congress back before December 28 to pass emergency legislation so to help these families.

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But more needs to be done to help countless other families in Illinois and across the country, including Darlette McAlpin who wrote to me:

"It's almost Christmas and my unemployment ran out in the middle of November. I don't have any savings, I'm behind in my mortgage and other bills. I don't have money to buy my children Christmas presents for the first time in their life. I don't have money for food..." President Bush's failed economic policies of tax cuts for the rich and trickle down economics will never work. Unemployment is at 6%, an eight-year high. And nationally, 1.73 million individuals have been unemployed for 27 weeks or more, the highest number of long-term unemployed since September 1993.

Democrats understand that economic recovery should be bottom up, not top down. We must put the money in the hands of those who need it and who will use it. That is why Democrats will lead the economic fight, starting with a plan to extend unemployment benefits to all of those who have lost jobs through no fault of their own. Every dollar of unemployment benefits provides \$2.15 in economic stimulus.

The Democrats are proposing a plan to provide coverage for workers who exhausted their extended benefits in 2002. Any worker who exhausted their initial 13 weeks of TEUC in 2002 would receive an additional 13 weeks. And any worker who is cut off on December 28th because of the termination of the TEUC program would receive the remainder of their original 13 weeks, plus an additional 13 weeks of assistance. These reforms would provide additional weeks to over one million jobless workers who exhausted their extended benefits in 2002, and to more than 800,000 workers who will be cut off on December 28th, when TEUC expires.

In addition, the legislation would extend coverage for workers who exhaust their regular benefits in 2003. It will extend the Federally-funded Temporary Emergency Unemployment Compensation (TEUC) program, which expires on December 28th, until June 30, 2003. Workers in every State would be eligible for 26 weeks of extended unemployment benefits, up from 13 weeks in the current TEUC program, after they exhaust their regular unemployment compensation. This will help 2.5 million jobless workers over the first 6 months in 2003.

This is the "gift" we demand for hard working families across our nation.